Performance of Barauni refinery

†726. SHRI GAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the financial condition of Barauni refinery;

(b) whether Barauni refinery has been carrying out production as per its capacity; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Barauni refinery had incurred a loss of Rs. 48.48 crore (before tax and interest) in the year 2001-2002.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. During the year 2001-02, capacity utilisation of Barauni refinery was 68.5%. Capacity utilisation was lower mainly due to less product demand.

Research on bio-fuel

727. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that bio-fuel has been prepared in the USA from grains like wheat, Bajra, Jowar, Maize, Soyabean, etc. at a cost of Rs. 45 per 3.80 litres (90 cents per US gallon) and in India, it will cost the same as cost of grains is similar in the USA and India, and that a microlight plane powered by this biofuel landed on 2nd February, at Nagpur Airport, as reported in the Lokmat dated the 3rd February, 2003; and

(b) if so, whether the R&D of Petroleum Ministry propose to consider feasibility of preparation of this fuel in India?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) While it is known that bio-fuel has been prepared in USA using grains like wheat, bajra, maize, soyabeen etc. and while Government are aware of the news item published in Lokmat edition of 3rd February 2003, the cost details of preparation of bio-fuels from grains in USA are not known.

(b) IOC (R&D) has conducted the studies to produce bio-diesel from various vegetable oils (edible and non-edible) on bench scale & pilot plant scale and has tested their suitability as a diesel component.

Mangalore-Hassan-Bangalore pipeline project

728. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken up the laying of the Mangalore-Hassan-Bangalore LPG pipeline work;

(b) if so, what is the present status of the work;

(c) what is the estimated cost of the above work;

(d) whether Government are aware that a large number of LPG tanker accidents are taking place every day on Mangalore-Bangalore route; and

(e) if so, whether Government would take the above work on priority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) and (e) Such projects are taken up on the basis of economic viability and technical feasibility of the project.

Auction of new blocks by ONGC

729. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the process of auction of new exploration blocks for Crude and Natural gas by ONGC is on;